Hawkes - Essex Farms. 1893.

ESSEX FARMS:
THE CRADLES OF AMERICAN HOMES.

AN ADDRESS

BY

HON. NATHAN M. HAWKES,

OF LYNN,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ESSEX AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

AT

HAVERHILL, MASS.,

THURSDAY, SEPT. 21, 1893.

SALEM, MASS.:
OBSERVER BOOK AND JOB PRINT.
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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY:

Thoreau, the keen observer, the philosopher of nature, walking along the southern exposure of his neighbor's hill-top on a first day of March, noted in his journal

"It is spring there, and Minot is puttering outside in the sun. How wise in his grandfather to select such a site for his house."

The Essex Agricultural Society, the honored guild of the farmers of Essex, has had a corporate existence of seventy-five years, having been incorporated in 1818.

To-day occurs the seventieth annual address. The Psalmist says that "three score years and ten are the length of man's days." The unbounded vitality of our Society after seventy-five years of usefulness is a striking reversal of Shakespeare's aphorism "The evil that men do lives after them." We can say the good that men do lives after them.

At such a milestone perhaps we may rest for one day from learned discussions and philosophical essays and glance back over the way we have traveled and then forward to see what lies before us.

There is a fraternity of race blood in this Society which may not be apparent to outsiders. Strangers may

query why so many names appear as the authors of annual addresses who are not practical farmers. The point cannot be better illustrated than here in this ancient and historic Haverhill.

A few years since, an instructive address was delivered by your brilliant young District Attorney. Readers of the wonderful self-revealing "Diary" of Chief Justice Samuel Sewall—the brave Witchcraft Judge, who publicly acknowledged his error—himself an Essex man, will appreciate the interest which the sons take in the affairs of the old County. Sewall's "Diary" abounds in references to Brother Moody, and whoever bears in his veins the colonial blood of the Sewalls and Moodys must respond to the call for service from his kin.

Sewall's "Diary" also lovingly dwells upon many cherished visits at Brother Northend's. Hence a descendant of Brother Northend of the old stock, going out to Nature for strength for forensic toils, came to the Society with words of experience.

Another man of our own time, whose family lines run back to the planting of the colony, whose genial presence has been a benison to our annual gatherings—the beloved Sheriff—has been a welcome speaker.

Timothy Pickering, who delivered the first address and was the organizer and first President of this Society, may not be called a practical farmer, but every fibre of his being was in close touch with the men of the soil who made Essex County historic ground.

Before the tragic scenes at Lexington and Concord had startled the world, Col. Timothy Pickering and the men of Salem had made (February 28—1775) the first armed

resistance to British aggression at the old North Bridge. In February, the men of Salem and Marblehead struck the key note, which, in April, resounded from Middlesex.

Col. Pickering was Post-master General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State in the cabinets of Washington and Adams. Later, he was Chief Justice of the Essex County Court of Common Pleas, United States Senator, and Representative in Congress from the Essex District.

He rounded out a long and useful career by promoting and organizing the society under whose auspices we are assembled to-day. Under his call the first meeting was held at Cyrus Cummings' tavern, at Topsfield, on the 16th day of February, 1818. Ichabod Tucker was chosen moderator and David Cummings, secretary; these, with John Adams, Paul Kent and Elisha Mack, were appointed a committee to report a plan of organization. Timothy Pickering was chosen president; and William Bartlett, Dr. Thomas Kittredge, John Heard and Ichabod Tucker, vice-presidents; Leverett Saltonstall, secretary; and Dr. Nehemiah Cleaveland, treasurer. Timothy Pickering was annually chosen president for ten years, to 1829, when he again delivered the annual address.

Col. Pickering was followed by Andrew Nichols, the botanist, the beloved physician of Danvers.

Then came that liberal preacher, the Rev. Abiel Abbott, of Beverly, of whom President Monroe said that he was the best talker he ever knew.

From that day on, the clergymen have done their share of the talking, as was eminently fit in a society of Puritan descent. I shall not presume to speak of the living, so I

pass by the present pastor of the First Church (the Village Church), of Danvers, and mention his predecessor, the sturdy leader of Orthodox thought, the preacher of the faith of the fathers, the Rev. Milton P. Braman. And there is also recalled, that pious scholar, wit, and humorist, the Rev. Dr. Leonard Withington, of Newbury, who described himself as "a modified Calvinist."

The Bar has been drawn upon for its leaders from "the silver tongued" James H. Duncan, and his cousin, the courtly Leveret Saltonstall, to the time of Judge Otis P. Lord and General Benjamin F. Butler. Caleb Cushing obeyed your call, he, of whom Isaac O. Barnes wittily and truthfully said: "There is a living, self-moving cyclopedia, from whom you can obtain information upon every question that has interested any people in any age of the world."

Gen. Henry K. Oliver, the versatile, the teacher, the sweet singer, the mayor of two cities, made his contribution and the fluent, ever ready Dr. George B. Loring was here, as everywhere among farmers, the popular favorite, for he delivered the annual address on three occasions.

This is not a catalogue of names of those who have addressed the Society, but I cannot refrain from naming two who were zealous in the cause of intelligent forestry. Ben: Perley Poore made Indian Hill a magnet that drew wits, savants, and practical men of affairs from the world over. Richard S. Fay made Lynnmere an earthly paradise. He created a forest which has become a profitable woodland. It is a stately memorial of the taste and genius of a man who was devoted to the development of agriculture.

The actual farmers who have followed the calling nearest to nature as a vocation to which other matters were mere avocations have been prominent.

Although honors came to such men as Hon. Daniel P. King, Gen. Josiah Newhall, and Hon. Asa Tarbell Newhall, enthusiastic devotion to and skilled direction of the farm were paramount and sufficient.

Hon. Asa T. Newhall is recorded as delivering the address in 1849, and again in 1884, but of course you know as well as I that it was not the old Squire who addressed you in the latter year, but his grandson of the same name and inherited talents, who now makes hay while the sun shines on the home farm. Verily, the sons find it pleasant to tread the paths of labor and of honor in the footsteps of respected sires.

These are but representative names in the galaxy of Essex men who have addressed this Society. Every address has been carefully prepared and a vast variety of interesting topics have been discussed.

A collection of the whole would make a valuable library for an intelligent household.

I should shrink from being added to this list, if I did not feel that the honor came to me, not as a personal one, but as a recognition of a family whose successive generations have tilled the soil on the intervales of Saugus River, from the planting of the colony to the present day. Members of this family are active in the councils of the Society, and I am grateful to be allowed to link my name with those who have gone before me, as an active member of the Essex Agricultural Society.

This Society is old enough to have made for itself an enviable history, but Essex agriculture had a world re-

nowned origin long before the days of Col. Pickering and his worthy associates. The first page of the first volume of "The Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England" bears a memorandum supposed to be in the hand-writing of Mr. Washborne, the first secretary of the Company, which is pregnant with and significant of a great event in the world's history. Its date is March 16, (the year unknown), probably 1628. If so, Endicott had not sailed. Winthrop would not depart for two years.

Without any verbiage or sentimentality in a matter of fact paper, it reveals without the need of comment or concordance what the company thought were prime objects and necessities in the great scheme of emigration.

I quote from the memorandum:

To provide to send for Newe England:

Ministers;
Pattent vnder seale;
A seale;
Wheate, rye, barly, oates, a hhed. of ech in the eare;
benes, pease;
Stones of all sorts of fruites, as peaches, plums, filberts, cherries;
Peare, aple, quince kernells, pomegranats;
Saffron heads;
Liquorice seed, rootes sent; & Madder rootes;
Potatoes;
Hoprootes;
Hempseede;
Flaxe seede, agenst wynter;
Connys;
Currant plants;
Tame Turkeys;

In that London chamber, with all the signs ominous of the Puritan revolt, Mathew Cradock, Thomas Goffe, Isaac Johnson, Sir Richard Saltonstall, John Humfrey, John Winthrop and their associates, with amazing shrewdness, yet in Christian humility, planned one of the epochs in the world's history.

First, of course, they selected ministers—the spiritual guides and comforters of the flock.

Secondly, they agreed to send over the Charter—the patent under seal. This instrument they regarded as their "Magna Charta," something which was to give them powers of government which Charles and his advisers never dreamed of when it was granted.

Having provided for the religious and civil government, the next consideration was to stock the intending colony with choice seeds for planting in the new soil.

The list was comprehensive—it embraced everything which was thought of value. From it one fact stands out boldly, namely, that the founders contemplated an agricultural and not a commercial community. The renown and wealth which came later from the fisheries, from commerce and then from manufactures, were not foreseen.

The farmers have maintained the Canaan of the fathers, and, looking upon the exhibit of this fair, may we query if it is not about time for Essex farmers to bury the silly question, does farming pay? and to ask instead, how many things besides the glitter of gold make it profitable?

It is time to cease to bewail the hard lot of the tillers of the soil. It is in order to tell the world that

our fathers did not find here a bleak and barren land. There is not a farmer in Essex County who deserves success, who does not achieve it. Conditions change and our farmers adapt themselves to the new demands. It may be that the great West can produce our well beloved Indian corn cheaper than we can upon our smaller areas, but the compensation is sure to be found in less work and more profit in our milk, butter and cheese and nearness to markets.

The free air of farm life does not alone fill the lungs with life-giving oxygen, and harden the muscles ; it makes and develops the brain that is to guide the affairs of men. Some time ago it was the fashion to apologize for Abraham Lincoln's lack of training. Short sighted mortals. All the colleges in the world could not have so equipped him for the peculiar work he was raised up to accomplish as the out-of-doors frontier life, which, under the Divine plan, was appointed him.

Rufus Choate, whom, Peleg W. Chandler in a memorial address before the Massachusetts Historical Society styled "a glorified Yankee", was born on Hog Island in our good town of Essex.

The name, Hog Island, is not particularly attractive, but the spot itself is a singularly beautiful one. The swift in-pouring tides of the ocean rush by it up the Essex River. Long reaches of gleaming sand bars lie at its feet. The blue Atlantic beats everlastingly against its rocky headlands.

A plain old homestead with its broad inherited acres on the bluff was an ideal home for a contemplative man, as the farmer, watching the procession of the seasons, is

apt to be. The sense of environment entered the brain of the possessor of that old farm as he held the plough or swung the scythe. With such surroundings, with temperate life, with the serenity that goes with the ownership of the soil, man raises better crops than grass or vegetables, better stock than Holsteins or Jerseys; he begets children of brains. Of such Rufus Choate was a type.

And the annals of the County are resplendent with like examples of boys and girls born in the low studded comfortable houses that antedated those monstrosities in a northern climate, the—so-called Queen Anne houses—who have gone forth to charm the world and tell whether or not farming pays.

The Puritan exodus from England to Massachusetts Bay was the most wisely conceived and the most grandly executed scheme of colonization that the annals of the human race relate. The van-guard of the peaceful army of occupation, which Endicott and Winthrop and Saltonstall and Dudley and Dummer led into Essex County, was carefully made up of the flower of the "country party" of England. Men did not come alone. They brought their wives and children with them. They were a select class of God-fearing, thinking men, who made the parish meetinghouse the center of temporal as well as of spiritual affairs, from which everything radiated. No drones and no paupers were allowed to come. The wise heads who directed the movement sent out the exact proportion of blacksmiths, weavers, tanners, millers and husbandmen needed to develop the country.

There was no crowding, no reckless strife to reach the goal of wealth at the expense of one's fellows. When

the coast line became dotted with parishes, a minister of the Gospel led a little flock inland and obtained a grant for a new plantation. Where else could this sturdy stock have found elements so adapted to founding a new civilization and a better home?

The people who pity us say that our soil is rocky—with swamps and forests—that our climate is bleak. They forget that Christ was born in a cave in rocky Judea—that the crags of bonny Scotland gave voice to the genius of Robert Burns and Walter Scott—that romance, chivalry and prowess in all eras have come down out of the hill countries. What would have become of the song of our Whittier if he had been shut up inside city walls or on a dull, endless flat land?

The fathers appreciated the woods, even if the age did people them with demons. With the town lot and the tillage land each householder had set apart to him a wood lot. This wood lot furnished materials to build the house that has sheltered the planter's children even to this day. And it, by the kindness of Nature, renews itself every generation, so that the same wood keeps his children's children warm and happy which sparkled and blazed in the original fire-place.

The great salt marshes were awaiting the Englishman's scythe and his cattle, as they have every fall from that day to this. Frost and snow mantled the earth in winter, but both, as we know, are agencies under a benign Providence working for the tiller of the soil. The snow has as necessary a place in the economy of Nature in the night of the year, as the sun, in the day of the year. Even the loose stones in the earth, that others would

have considered a curse, were to our foreseeing fathers a blessing in disguise. For in the very first generation the yeoman and his boys constructed many miles of the ugly, yet enduring, stone walls that still stand—monuments alike of the thrift and grit of the founders and the loyalty of the sons of the soil.

Facilities for education are important factors in deciding whether the calling that is followed is profitable. The mind must be fed as well as the body, else one is poor indeed, though with unlimited gold. The founders of Essex County brought with the pastor, his colleague, the teacher. Amidst the broadening influences of this virgin soil, the Puritan evolved the highest instrumentality in the growth of man—the common school. It was not possible under the old world forms of government and thought. The mediæval ecclesiastic fears it more than all the potentates of earth combined, and a threat against it sounds the alarm which unites all loyal Americans. The common school had its birth here, and here it has flourished and is to-day the model for all enlightened states.

In the south gallery of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building at the World's Columbian Exposition hangs a map, which is attracting as much if not more attention than any other exhibit in the building. It is a map of immense proportions and shows the number of schools that each city and town in Massachusetts has established and is supporting. People from all parts of the United States have seen it and pronounced it the most wonderful exhibit yet produced. No other state—in fact no other country—can produce anything equal to it.

As early as 1635, our towns established schools, supporting them in various ways, by subscriptions, by endowments, by grants of income from the common stock lands, by fishing privileges, by tuition fees, by direct taxation, and they have been steadily climbing to the top. At no time has the work been relaxed. And now, Massachusetts leads the world in educational privileges.

Of this map the director of education of the State of New York is reported to have said to E. C. Hovey, Chairman of the Massachusetts World's Fair Commission, "If New York State could show a map such as that I would be willing to throw our entire exhibit into Lake Michigan. There is nothing which equals it."

George H. Martin's descriptive account of our schools accompanying the map shows that from its beginning the State has had a complete system of public elementary schools, secondary schools, and the college. The second century of the educational history of the State is marked by an effort to adapt the school system to the needs of a widely scattered agricultural population. On this map our county stands second to none among the counties of the State.

When you think of the great farms of the northwest and are inclined to repine because you cannot make such haste to get rich, look upon the other side of the shield. Set your schools against the hordes of foreign immigrants, who, in some of the farming states are controlling legislation against teaching English and against the existence of the common school itself. Your children's priceless privileges weigh down the scale of advantages solidly upon your side.

Of the foundation of these schools, Lord Macaulay once said in parliament: "Illustrious forever in history were the founders of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; though their love of freedom of conscience was illimitable and indestructible they could see nothing servile or degrading in the principle that the State should take upon itself the charge of the education of the people. In the year 1642, they passed their first legislative enactment on this subject, in the preamble of which they distinctly pledged themselves to this principle, that education was a matter of the deepest possible importance and the greatest possible interest to all nations and to all communities, and that as such it was, in an eminent degree, deserving of the peculiar attention of the State."

The matter of race has much to do with success in farming. Down to the Revolution, the people of New England were, almost without exception, of pure English blood. The same statement is nearly as true to-day of the farmers of Essex County. As distinctive as the worship of the crocodile by the dwellers on the Nile, or the adoration of the god of War by the Romans, has ever been the Anglo-Saxon reverence for land.

With love of the land there is also associated regard and veneration for trees. It is true that the fathers waged war upon the forests, but that was a necessity of their situation. They wanted the sunshine to warm their virgin soil. They needed the wood for fuel, for rafters, sills and boards. Besides the requirement of cleared lands for cultivation, there was ever the thought that the clearings made so many less lurking places for the skulk-

ing Red Indian who was always a peril in the shadows of the forest.

So far as we may properly go without being charged with the sin of idolatry, we Americans are tree worshippers. It is perfectly natural for us to be so. It is bred in our bone. It is an inheritance from our English ancestors. The Romans, who made a strong impression on the native tribes of England, venerated trees, erected temples in their groves and ordained sacrifices in their honor. The Druids lived in them, as it was thought more sacred to dwell under trees and about their rock altars than in the open plains.

Trees are our most striking evidence in material things of our immortal life. We plant them and they live on far beyond our lives. In planting them we think not so much of ourselves as of the future generations. The myriad voices of the trees speak to us in the same tones that they did to our fathers in the past and as they will to our children in future ages.

The magnificent Waverly oaks were mature trees when the keel of the Mayflower touched the gleaming sands of Plymouth harbor. The south wind played the same soothing melodies through their branches then as now, though the Indian, whose moccasins noiselessly trod the sward at their feet, has vanished from the face of the earth and the humble Pilgrim from Leyden has inspired and created the greatest nation of the civilized world. The old trees saw the Red man and the Englishman play their parts and are still sturdy—as well they need be—while they listen to the polyglot tongues that now babble around them.

Seasons come and go, leaves ripen and fall, buds unfold into leaf and blossom, but the tree grows on and on and recks not that the white headed old man who thoughtfully reposes in its shade is the same person who sported beneath its limbs in childhood's merry hours.

In the good work of quickening an interest in forestry, this Society has held an advanced position, and among individuals interested, its present President is easily leader.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, the greatest story teller of New England lore, tenderly related his journeyings in "Our Old Home." Do we realize that while old England is the old home to those of the stock who have remained hereabouts, there is a vastly greater company of the descendants of people of New England birth who have found new homes in the great West, even to the Golden Gate on the Pacific? To all these millions, Massachusetts and Essex County are the old home. The standard elms and the south-facing, long sloping back roofed houses with the great stack of chimneys in the centre, to all these people are home and history and the starting point of family lines.

Over in Quincy, in such houses as are identical in form and construction and surroundings with hundreds in Essex County, the two Presidents of the United States, of Massachusetts birth were born.

In Danvers, the room in which Israel Putnam was born is kept just as it was when the tough old ranger first saw the light. The whole County is dotted with these old earth-hugging houses upon which the storms of bleak winters have beaten, in vain, for centuries.

To-day at Chicago nothing wins more praise and admiration than the John Hancock house and it is said that the Colonial exhibit in the Massachusetts department exceeds in interest anything of the kind in the fair, and that the old bureaus, the old bedsteads, and the models of the old houses to be found there have a grace and beauty in point of size, and model, and execution that is not reached in the greater part of our modern furniture or our modern dwellings.

These houses are to be found along the New England coast from Portsmouth, Rhode Island, to Wells, in Maine. But there are more of them in Essex County than any where else, more even than in Plymouth or Middlesex. They are historic houses of America, and, as a well-known writer says, they express both the English freedom of the seventeenth century and the regard for comfort and security and strength which our New England fathers were obliged to consider when they built homes of their own.

They were wisely built by men who knew the climate and by men who were founding families. They overlooked the broad acres which their builders had redeemed from the wilderness. Square, prim and strong, admirably adapted to the age in which they were built, time has mellowed their surroundings and made them one and all picturesque and important adjuncts in every hamlet in the County. Every one is full of the traditions and history of its long departed occupants and of the people.

From the windows of that house a child saw the gray stockinged young farmers from Danvers tarry for a drink

from the bucket in the well on the fateful morning of the 19th of April, 1775. The child looking from the windows saw upon the return from Lexington a sad sight for youthful eyes and for the mourners, though liberty on that day was born. The child saw the gray-stockinged forms cold in death as the rumbling wagons bore their sacred burdens back to wailing families. That child never forgot the scene, and in old age used to tell the story to younger people, and he who heard it from her lips was himself an old man when he related it to me.

Scenes an hundred years prior to Lexington have these old houses seen. Upon the bank of the North River, in the midst of the sloping fields, where to-day the September sun is ripening farmer Jacobs' crops, stands the substantial house with the surroundings practically as they were when its master, George Jacobs—Saint George of old Northfields as we call him now—was led away for shameful death in the dark days of the witchcraft troubles in 1692.

Here in Haverhill your late public spirited fellow citizen, James H. Carleton, did a characteristic and noble deed when, in his life time—not making it an after death benefaction—he secured the preservation of the birthplace of the sweet poet whose rhymed lines are in closest touch with the finest expression of New England life. Whittier is the immortal flower of rural New England. Mr. Carleton has made this plain farm house the Mecca towards which throngs of lovers of the poet will be drawn and say with him

"Nor farm house with its maple shade,
Or rigid poplar colonnade,
But lies distinct and full in sight,
Beneath this gush of sunset light."

The builders of these houses were brothers to the regicides across the sea. They were Commonwealth men. They were the advanced liberals of the age. They at home had dreamed of establishing beyond the ocean a greater England, freed from feudalism, prelacy and kingcraft. While they were setting up their Puritan theocracy, growing attached to the new homes, the experiment of the Commonwealth was tried in England and was lost when the great Cromwell died.

The profligate reign of Charles the 2nd and the bigoted reign of James the 2nd were followed by the great Revolution of 1689, which brought in the Dutch William. And then came the day of the intriguing and venal place hunters of the reign of Anne.

The Protestant Revolution of 1689 did well enough for conservative England, but the more radical Bay Colony had learned to walk alone. It wanted no Queen Anne houses with chimneys on the outside. These were adapted to negro quarters in the sunny South, but not for our north country. An American architecture had been evolved. American thought had been created, and from then on, our fathers planned for emancipation from the political yoke.

Let us not learn from strangers to appreciate the historic value nor the substantial use of the stout houses that are gems set in the grassy lanes of old Essex, but let us so care for them as to make them still more attractive to the wanderer who returns to the home of his people.

It is almost striking to observe the traits and features of one generation repeated in its successors in a locality where the people have become fixed in their habits and are acclimated to their surroundings. Such resemblances are striking in English counties, in France, and in other localities where man and the climate and the soil harmonize. These conditions seem to be fast attached to our county. If the art of photography had existed in the 17th century, the portrait of the first settler of what is now Middleton would have been a good likeness of the thrifty farmer of Middleton who took prizes for his stock at recent cattle shows. The same rule holds throughout the county. The same names prosper upon the same acres. They are still the deacons and selectmen and possessors of fat pocket-books, filled by working brains into the ancestral—rough it may be—but loved acres.

The charter granted the land to the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay in New England in fee. The Colony gave the same kind of title to towns, commoners and individuals, free from Old World services and limitations.

Out of this absolute holding of land grew an independent yeomanry, which in the fullness of time stormed Louisburg, the Gibraltar of France in America, and a generation later defied England's power on Bunker Hill.

Such men—the men of the town meeting—the men who made America the shining example of human development, came from the stock of owners and tillers of the soil.

A peasantry never accomplished such results. A peasantry may tear down, but never build up. Wherever man owns his farm, his garden, or his house, it is safe to

say that modern Nationalism—the scheme of having a paternal government own everything and regulate every man's labor, will not be popular. Such doctrines will scarcely take root in Essex County.

The general holding of farms in this county for two hundred and fifty years in family line, in fee simple, without any laws against alienation, is something without parallel in human history. Six cities have grown up (with a seventh about to assume the civic gown) without materially taking from our arable territory. No land titles in the world stand upon so just a base. We care nothing for the original grant from the King of England. The settlement was made at just that period, when under the plan of the Creator, this portion of the earth was appointed for the occupation of a new race. Pestilence and war had swept away the once numerous tribes of Red Men, so that only a scattered remnant remained. Whatever rights they had in the earth, sky and water, in the prolix phraseology of the period, they willingly conveyed to our shrewd ancestors. Thus all the lands are held by a triple title—first, the royal grant, second, the town grant, and third, the Indian release.

Since that time neither pestilence, earthquake, cyclone, famine, nor war, has devastated our domain. To-day the only danger that threatens the stone fenced ancient farms is found in the incursion of cultured, but jaded city men, who have discovered the charms of rural life and seek to dispossess after the manner of Alexander of Macedon, who said, "I despair of taking no city into which I can introduce a mule laden with gold." Such taking may not

be unwelcome to some, but it will be in the far future when the Yankee farmer yields up his supremacy amidst the hills, dales and intervales of old Essex.

Washington Irving has painted with loving minuteness the master of Bracebridge Hall.

His certain life, that never can deceive him,
Is full of thousand sweets, and rich content;
The smooth-leaved beeches in the field receive him
With coolest shade, till noontide's heat be spent.
His life is neither tost in boisterous seas
Or the vexatious world; or lost in slothful ease.
Pleased and full blessed he lives, when he his God can please.

The genial squire lives in real life in every hamlet in this picturesque region of ours, from the serpentine Saugus to the majestic Merrimac.

The farmers of Essex are not forced to lead isolated lives, as is the case in most rural districts. The steam railroad penetrates every town in the county, save Nahant, and the people there much prefer to be without the luxury.

In the near future the electric car, both for freight and passengers, will stop at every farm house. This is not a Utopian dream, but a practical scheme, which the Engineering Magazine is strongly urging and which is already, so far as passengers are concerned, in actual operation in many towns; and on one line at least, freight cars run.

The constant passing of cars over city pavements between brick walls is not an unmixed blessing, but stated trips of such cars will be a great benefit to the farmer and his family, especially in those seasons of the

year when country roads—even the best—are liable to be muddy and not comfortable for ordinary locomotion.

Besides the economical uses of these cars, they will facilitate the enjoyment of another institution in which Massachusetts stands in the van—the public library system.

"Of making many books there is no end," but the Public Library is one of the marvels of the nineteenth century. Public schools and newspapers have made readers of all, but no individual can expect to own, or if he did own, could furnish shelf-room for, all the books he may desire to read. The Public Library selects, houses, cares for, and distributes the printed treasures of the thought of the world in every town to every family.

As many books are accessible to the village maiden to-day, as the scholars of the universities had at their command a few years ago.

Yes! Thoreau was right. It was fortunate for us that our fathers made their landfall upon this coast of sand-bars and rocky headlands—upon this land of marsh and wooded hillside—this region with frost enough in the atmosphere to make man work for his bread with muscle and brain—this land now teeming with folk-lore of a plain God-fearing yeomanry — this favored home of the free common school and the free public library.

They found here a soil that with industry would reward labor,—they found a land full of noble trees and charming wild flowers—they built homely houses, which they have bequeathed to us with their records of well spent and often heroic lives.

While there is a pride that dwells too much upon the past, yet there is much that has come down with the heirlooms that is worthy of our emulation. While we employ all new inventions that lessen labor in our chosen callings we may ponder with profit upon the lives of our ancestors, who, with lesser means and with ruder implements made their lives successful and their influence salutary upon those who followed them.

These thoughts are trite, but when we observe the mad rush of life in cities, hearts broken and lives wrecked in the constant reverses of business, it is meet for the farmer to reflect upon his life so near to nature, so near to the things which were dear to his kin, so free from the corrosion of all other pursuits.